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JEALOUSY.

A COMMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A ZEALOT IN TULLE."

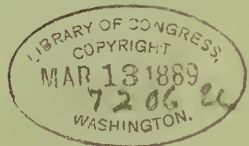
Marion White Wildrick.

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JEALOUSY.

A COMMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A ZEALOT IN TULLE."

CHARACTERS.

PAUL GOLIGHTLEY, GERTRUDE GOLIGHTLEY, *Man and Wife.*

FRANK TRALEE, MADGE POMEROY, *Engaged to be married.*

MOSES PERIWINKLE, *Servant.*

SCENE.—A parlor. As the curtain rises a very corpulent, middle-aged man-servant is discovered posing in front of a mirror, with a duster trailing from his hand. His manner is one of perplexity as he stands on tiptoe, turning this way, now that, in his efforts to obtain an undivided view of his back. He advances towards the front of the stage.

Moses Periwinkle. I very much fear me there is something chalked onto the middle of my back. I wish I knowed. Just you listen, now, to those two young ladies a-carryin' on! I suspicion 'em—I—I—— Oh, deary! there they come again: *this* way, too! I'm afeard of 'em. I speak right out. I'm afeard of 'em. Oh, gimini! [*he backs to a position in front of the mirror, rising on tiptoe, and trying to look again over one shoulder, now the other, at himself reflected there*] if I could only get one good look at my back! I'd know the worstest, then. Is there any object chalked onto it? Is it a name or a face—or—or a kangaroo—is it? They're at the door! What now, Moses Periwinkle—be a man, sir! Fetch a cool face! Don't let 'em play any more games onto you!

[*As he hastens from the mirror, slapping the furniture energetically with his duster, a door opens and two young ladies enter, bearing in their arms masses of wearing apparel. MOSES backs towards an opposite door with a dancing, ceremonious step and disappears.*]

Madge Pomeroy. Yes, laugh—laugh, Gertrude. Never stop! It's the only hope you can have against such dismal, foolish thoughts as you persist in.

Mrs. Golightley. I try to laugh with you, Madge, but 'tis the hardest thing I ever had to do. I fear the future. Paul may not prove true. It may be for him too trying an ordeal. [*Throws down her armful of*

clothes and clasps her hands together.] Then, then, Madge, what should I do? I must live with him all the days of my life! "For better, for worse." "For better, for worse." Don't you hear those words, Madge, tolling like a knell?

Madge. That refrain is dreadfuller than the old clock's on the stair. I declare it is! But away with such frightening fancies! Gertrude, let me ask you, what if Paul *should* prove true?

Mrs. Golightley. [*Pausing in her nervous walk to and fro, as if taken aback by the novelty of this idea.*] I never thought of such a possibility. That never occurred to me. Under those circumstances, I—I—might feel ashamed of myself.

Madge. Speed the happy hour! You need to be made to feel ashamed of yourself. [*She regards her friend's drooping air for a moment in compassionate silence, then begins energetically to shake out from the mass of wearing apparel dumped on a chair divers veils, ribbons, and wraps. These she places one by one upon a table.*] Now Gertrude, so far as I am concerned in this matter——

Mrs. Golightley. Well?

Madge. Here is my position in a few words: I haven't been married three weeks. I don't go worrying all the time as to whom Frank might have loved if he hadn't loved me; as to what he might do in the future, were he tried. I am simply myself,—Madge Pomeroy, at your service,—engaged to Frank and willing to believe that Frank's fidelity to me would stand any trial. So, having proclaimed the faith I have in the man I love, I think only of the sport we are to have,—and it will be sport, indeed!

Mrs. Golightley. Yes, sport for you, perhaps. Frank is different from Paul. Frank never trifles. Paul is a poet, a dreamer. He is easily led,—so easily——

Madge. By you! Don't lay *that* up against your husband, Gertrude.

Mrs. Golightley. No; but don't you see, Madge, Paul explains himself to me in that way? If *I* can lead him so easily, then why cannot somebody else? The thought makes me wretched. It will recur whatever I may do to banish it. *Had he not met me first, he would have met and loved somebody else!*

Madge. Oh, Gertrude! Now I *must* laugh one little trill at your expense.

Mrs. Golightley. [*Pacing to and fro.*] Failing all hope of ever discovering the identity of that other woman whom Paul might have loved had he met her first, it still remains to me to probe the present and the future; to learn the worst of his emotional capabilities where other women are concerned. I shall never rest until I have done this thing.

Madge. I believe you. You are become a monomaniac. I suppose

there are other women in this world like you who, with tenderly loved husbands to adore them, doubt that adoration because it comes so easy. Did the man stand off, you'd forget all your doubts in your eagerness to win him.

Mrs. Golightley. A sermon!

Madge. No, not yet. A sermon may come in aptly enough at the end of our frolic. For, remember, this escapade of ours is to be one of pure fun, and no tragedy. We are simply to play a woman's trick on the men we love. So, 'tis "hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny!"

Gertrude. Oh, to have your light heart!

Madge. It comes with the trying to have it. But come, dear, sit you here. [*Pressing MRS. GOLIGHTLEY into an easy-chair placed before the looking-glass.*] Time is passing. Time won't wait for moods or tenses or—intenses. There, that's poor, I know. I won't perpetrate another such, not even if you'll consent to laugh at it. Now here is our make-up. [*Fingers carefully the different toilet-articles scattered on a table.*] Yes, here you are,—wigs, blonde powder, rouge, and veloutine. Now, Gertrude, I'll bewig you and blacken your eyebrows and tint up your complexion; then veil you, until, disguised as you are in that strange dress and decked out in those other furbelows, why, you should deceive even me, your confederate!

Mrs. Golightley. But—but—[*her voice falling dismally*] what if Paul should fall in love with me?

Madge. [*Laughs as she applies the powder-puff to GERTRUDE'S up-turned face.*] I think that state of affairs might be explained, might it not? as a sort of second nature. There, there,—you are so dreadfully in earnest, I didn't mean to jest.

Mrs. Golightley. Madge, dear.

Madge. Yes, Gertrude.

Mrs. Golightley. I have never thought to ask you before. I have been too self-absorbed. Have you any trouble?

Madge. Let me think. No—yes,—oh, yes, but I never thought of it before—as a trouble, I mean.

Mrs. Golightley. Tell me about it, do. Perhaps I can help you.

Madge. It's about Frank.

[*MRS. GOLIGHTLEY glances up into MADGE'S face with eyes of compassionate concern and takes one of the girl's hands in her own.*]

Mrs. Golightley. I thought so, dear. None of us are exempt, you see.

Madge. It isn't a great trial, not a great one like yours. It's only about Frank not wearing buttons and things.

Mrs. Golightley. Buttons! not wear buttons! Oh, Madge, that is impossible!

Madge. Well, of course it doesn't sound like much of a trial after your tribulations; but you don't know how much happier I'd be

when I think of Frank, did he wear bright buttons and shoulder-straps, and did he walk in this way,—see, in this way,—shoulders back, eyes to the front, head up, chin in,—so. When I dream of Frank he is always in uniform, and I refuse to believe that dreams go by contraries.

Mrs. Golightley. That is no sorrow, child. May you never have a deeper one. Now, we must hurry in our preparations, or those gentlemen may return before we are ready. Moses! [*Calls again.*] Moses!

Enter MOSES.

Moses. Ma'am, your servant.

Mrs. Golightley. Are the gentlemen in sight?

Moses. I'm sure not, for I've been a-watchin' th' road, so as to serve supper when they come.

[*MRS. GOLIGHTLEY strikes an impressive attitude.*]

Mrs. Golightley. Listen to my instructions, Moses Periwinkle! When Mr. Golightley and Mr. Tralee left home this morning, they understood that Miss Pomeroy and I were to be found absent on their return. So, understand, Moses, when they do arrive you are to announce us as young ladies who, rowing on the lake, have taken shelter here from the storm.

Moses. As you direct me, ma'am.

[*In the mean time MRS. GOLIGHTLEY and MADGE have given a few last touches to their disguises. They turn now to confront MOSES PERIWINKLE. He retreats in confusion.*]

Moses. Yes, yes, Miss Gertrude—ma'am—if you're yourself—that is—Miss—Miss——

Madge. Our disguise is indeed a success if you are set agog by it, good Moses.

Mrs. Golightley. Now, sir, go and watch carefully; advise us in time of our lords' return; and, above all, do not dare betray our secret to any one.

[*Exit MOSES.*]

[*MADGE takes two or three airy steps before MRS. GOLIGHTLEY.*]

Madge. Now, I look lovely, I know I do, and I shall make such violent love to my dear Frank.

Mrs. Golightley. The die is cast. Look at me. Am I disguised?

Madge. Yes; you are very different, Gertrude. Before this evening is over, I am sure, you will be declaring on my shoulder, or on Paul's, that all men are true!

[*MADGE proceeds to clear the table of the tell-tale toilet-articles left scattered upon it.*]

Enter MOSES.

Moses. Ma'am, while I was here a moment ago, master and Mr. Tralee drove through the yard to the stable. Shall I serve supper?

Mrs. Golightley. Delay supper for a few moments,—that is, until

Mr. Golightley inquires why it is not served. [*Exit MOSES.*] I must have one little while longer in which to compose myself. Oh, Madge, I do tremble.

Madge. Don't tremble. Be brave. Remember this is to be a frolic only. Hark! they come! [*She begins an inquisitive excursion around the room. A door opens.*] What lovely pictures are to be found here. A—a—Bouguereau. Look at the light on that child's hands. How very like true sun-light——

Enter PAUL GOLIGHTLEY and FRANK TRALEE, smoking.

Mr. Golightley. Deserted, indeed, I feel, and how sad and lonely [*Throwing his coat on a chair.*] It is the first time I have been separated from my wife since our marriage.

Frank. [*Removing his cigar from his mouth.*] Look about you, man. Not so very lonely after all.

Madge. [*Still rambling about the room with her back turned upon the gentlemen.*] I wonder how the people look who live in this charming house. Can they be as delightful?—Ah!

Mr. Golightley. [*Taking his cigar from his mouth and advancing.*] Your pardon, ladies.

Madge. Oh!

Mrs. Golightley. [*Rising from a seat beside the fire.*] Sir, we beg yours. We find ourselves your uninvited guests, having taken shelter here from the storm. We were rowing on the lake when the rain came on. [*Waving her hand in the direction of MADGE.*] My friend, Miss Dacre.

Madge. [*Waving hers.*] And my friend, Miss Madge Kirby.

Mr. Golightley. [*Indicating FRANK.*] Allow me to present to you my friend, Mr. Frank Tralee. My name is Golightley,—Paul Golightley. We are bachelors to-night, our family being absent from home; but we bid you young ladies welcome all the same.

Madge. [*In a disappointed voice.*] Are you not always bachelors?

Frank. I am, but my friend Golightley, there, is not so fortunate.

Madge. [*Aside.*] Oh! oh!

Mrs. Golightley. We shall not intrude longer than is absolutely necessary upon your kind, but enforced, hospitality. The rain may cease soon, and then——

Mr. Golightley. Don't think of such a cruel thing as departure, I pray of you. The storm will last all night, I am sure. Be seated, young ladies; or will you retire to my wife's boudoir.

Mrs. Golightley. I—I—would like a—a thread and needle or a—a hair-pin. [*Aside.*] Oh, to be alone for just one moment. I—I feel so frightened—so beside myself.

Mr. Golightley. [*Opening door.*] Enter, ladies, and make yourselves

entirely at home. I welcome your presence within even more warmly than my wife would, were she here. By the time you return to us supper shall be served. *[Exit ladies.]*

Frank. I smell a rat. *[Seizes a poker from the fire-place.]*

Mr. Golightley. *[Throwing up his head and sniffing the air.]* It is a most penetrating bouquet,—bouquet de rodent. Anybody would recognize it.

Frank. *[Striking a tragic attitude.]* What now! a rat! *[Pretends to draw a sword from its scabbard à la Hamlet.]* Dead! for a ducat, dead! *[Makes a pass with the poker through an imaginary arras.]*

Enter MOSES.

Moses. Oh!—oh!— It's only a frolic, master, only a frolic, and I've promised not to tell——

Mr. Golightley. Ghost of Polonius! Serve supper at once, sir. Begone! *[Exit MOSES in a hurry.]*

Frank. Poor Eve's daughters!

Mr. Golightley. Yes; what children they are! But let us help them out with it.

Enter MRS. GOLIGHTLEY and MADGE, the latter fastening a rose in the waist of her gown.

Frank. *[Crossing to MRS. GOLIGHTLEY.]* You have no flower. Let me give you one. I have seen you many times rowing upon the lake, and I have longed to take lessons of you at the oar. Believe me, I am an apt pupil at any diversion.

Enter MOSES with a tray of dishes. He lays the cloth and sets the table. Exit as soon as done.

Mr. Golightley. *[Devoting himself to MADGE.]* Had you schemed to give us pleasure this evening, you could not have succeeded so well. I am not only a bachelor to-night, but under these most pleasant and unexpected circumstances I enjoy being a bachelor.

Frank. *[To MRS. GOLIGHTLEY, who watches her husband.]* Why do you turn away from me? *[plaintively.]* You will cause me to hate my best friend. It is useless for you to regard him longer. He is too far gone. Your friend attracts him, while I——

Mrs. Golightley. *[Interrupting him with scorn.]* You!

Mr. Golightley. *[Offering his arm to MADGE.]* Allow me. Supper is served, I believe. Tralee, fetch Miss Kirby. To-night we shall eat and be merry, for to-morrow—*[pauses with a gesture of despair]* to-morrow I shall be willing to die; won't you, hey, little Miss Dacre? *[Sings.]*

Oh, Moses, fill the flowing bowl
Until it doth run over;
Oh, Moses——

[*Scans the supper-table with an air of surprise.*] If that fellow hasn't forgot the flowing bowl! Neither wine nor bowl can my longing eyes discover. We can't stand this. We need enlivening. The wine! the wine! Miss Dacre, you sha'n't go much longer without your little warming glass or two. I'll hie me to fetch the where-with to fill the intoxicating measure. [*Exit.*]

Madge. [*Seated at table.*] Mr.—Mr. Tralee, this is a dish, I believe, of compôte de pigeon. Shall I help you to a little of it, Mr.—[*coaxingly*] Mr. Tralee?

Frank. [*With an air of severity.*] Ladies first, please. [*He turns tenderly to MRS. GOLIGHTLEY.*] Allow me, Miss Kirby, to pass your plate for a little of the compôte de pigeon.

Mrs. Golightley. It would choke me. I—I——

Enter MR. GOLIGHTLEY.

Mr. Golightley. Behold, ladies, the oldest inhabitant of my cellar. [*Shows bottle.*] When questioned as to its disappearance, I shall have to fib about it, for my wife likes port, and has had her particular eye upon this particular bottle a long while. [*To MRS. GOLIGHTLEY.*] Miss Kirby, allow me.

Mrs. Golightley. [*Waving her hand tragically over her glass.*] None for me.

Enter MOSES.

Moses. A telegram, sir.

Mr. Golightley. From Gertrude, perhaps. Heavens! what if she should appear at this moment! [*Opens message and glances over it.*]

Mrs. Golightley. [*Starting to her feet.*] Yes [*aside*], what if she should appear at this moment! [*Makes a movement as if to tear away her disguises, but is withheld by MADGE, who lays a hand upon her arm.*]

Frank. [*To MADGE.*] Is your friend Miss Kirby hysterical?

Madge. Sh—she doesn't like telegrams.

Frank. [*Approaching MRS. GOLIGHTLEY.*] For my sake, Miss Kirby, restrain yourself.

Mr. Golightley. [*Reading message aloud.*] "Shall arrive by eight-o'clock train." That's what it says, Frank. Now here is a go! [*Bows his head upon his hand.*]

Mrs. Golightley. [*Bitterly.*] Is it your wife returning?

Madge. [*Aside.*] Hush, Gertrude.

Mr. Golightley. Not so bad as that. Two of my oldest friends wire me that they are on the road to visit with me. Two of my oldest friends,—Captains Smith and Brand of the army.

Madge. [*Clasping her hands in ecstasy.*] Real captains?

Frank. [*With sudden anxiety.*] Pray, what is that to you?—at—at least—ah—ah, Miss Dacre, do you prefer army men?

Mrs. Golightley. [*Recovering an air of indifference.*] If you are to

meet your friends, sir (*addressing MR. GOLIGHTLEY*), pray do not let us detain you.

Madge. I love army officers.

Mr. Golightley. Then, if you permit us, ladies, Mr. Tralee and I will be off to meet our friends. We are an hour late, and there is danger of missing them on the road. Still we *must* go. [*Approaching MADGE and taking her hand.*] Believe me, Miss Dacre, the thought of leaving you so early in our acquaintance quite unnerves me. My only hope and consolation is the thought that you will consent to await here my most eager return to your society.

Madge. [*In a very faint voice.*] I—I don't know about it.

Frank. [*Follows MRS. GOLIGHTLEY, who walks nervously to and fro.*] Yes, Miss Kirby, await my return; and, as a token, give me that flower.

Mrs. Golightley. [*Throwing the flower on the ground.*] Stoop for it! As for your friend, Mr. Golightley [*turning severely towards that gentleman*], he would stoop much lower for a favor from *any* woman!

Frank. [*Aside.*] Had him there.

Mr. Golightley. Tear yourself away, Tralee, we must be off.

Frank. Most hateful duty! Miss Kirby, *au revoir*.

[*Exeunt both gentlemen.*]

[*When they are gone, the ladies tear off their hats and veils.*]

Mrs. Golightley. [*With her back turned on MADGE.*] Perfidious! And you were chosen to share the one secret of my soul. You—— Oh, heaven, spare my distracted reason!

Madge. [*In an astonished voice.*] Oh! ah! how—how is that? [*Turning her back also.*] Ah, I see. And so this is to be my return. Your anger; his disloyalty; nothing left me but to send Frank away to-morrow. I was so happy. I knew no fear. Oh, woman, why did I allow you to teach me to mistrust?

Mrs. Golightley. [*Turning swiftly.*] Yes. Innocence itself! Confiding nature! Clinging vine! Come, sweet one, repose upon the bosom you have lacerated. [*Extends her arms.*]

Madge. [*Facing her.*] And this to me? What have I done to deserve that look, that tone?

Mrs. Golightley. Done! Did I not see your glances, hear your asides? You encouraged Paul; you led him on.

Madge. [*Tossing her head.*] Indeed! So you accuse me! Well, then, he could not but be fascinated by me. He said so,—Paul said so. You may have heard him. And I—I listened *delighted*, for while he whispered, you—you were inviting Frank to throw himself at your feet.

Mrs. Golightley. [*Contemptuously.*] That boy! never! [*Sinks into a chair. Drops her head upon the table.*] I see it all. It's all clear now. Paul would have loved *you* had he met you first. I have always

felt he would have loved *somebody* had he met that *somebody* first. You would have been his wife, and I—I—*not* his wife. Oh, my brain, my heart on fire! [*Starts to her feet.*] But one joy remains to me,—let me not forget it,—one thing yet to live for,—revenge! *revenge!*

Madge. Yes; but oh, dear! why do you look at me in that way, Gertrude?

Mrs. Golightley. What, ho, without, there!

Madge. Crazy! she's crazy! What shall I do? Gertrude, listen to me, look me in the eye. [*Aside.*] I've heard that looking in the calm eye of a friend soothes the excited brain.

Mrs. Golightley. What, ho, without, there! *Slave!* minion!

Enter MOSES.

Moses. Oh, dear! oh, dreadful! I thought I must be a dreamin', but I ain't. They're both crazy! both gone crazy! [*Shivers and covers by the door.*]

Mrs. Golightley. [*Extending her hand.*] Peace, caitiff.

Madge. [*Extending hers.*] Peace, poor idiot.

Moses. It's gone too far, the frolic has. I see it when's too late. Listen, Missus Gertrude [*approaches gingerly*], there's strangers at the door. Two officers into brass buttons, Missus Gertrude.

Mrs. Golightley. Gadzookers, sir! Two officers, say you?

Madge. With real swords on hip?

Moses. Yes, miss, are a-come to stay awhile, says they.

Mrs. Golightley. Bid them enter. No, stand you without one moment, good Moses. [*Exit MOSES.*]

[*MRS. GOLIGHTLEY seizes MADGE'S hand.*]

Mrs. Golightley. Madge, revenge! revenge!

Madge. Yes, revenge! revenge! [*Then in a sinking voice.*] But how? how? I couldn't stab any one, I know I couldn't!

Mrs. Golightley. Let us repay our gay Lotharios in their own coin. We will receive these strange gentlemen; win by every art their admiration, and then—then those perfidious ones, returning, shall find us basking in the sunshine of their smiles.

Madge. Yes; but who are we?—to these officers, I mean.

Mrs. Golightley. Let us still play the part of ship-wrecked mariners, unveiled, for with these gentlemen, strangers to us, no disguise is necessary. I shall seat myself here to make a dressing for yon salad. We will invite them to the banquet, and our lords, returning, shall find these swordsmen sipping the contents of that bottle. Oh, Madge, that bottle was the pride of Paul's cellar; he swore by its cobwebs; yet he ran like a boy to fillip it forth for you!

Madge. There, there, Gertrude, this is not avenging ourselves,—this is wasting time. See, here I seat myself to crochet. Behold the needle and behold the wool! I forget Frank willingly. He becomes abstract

to my mind, a mere creature of mirage. Two officers—only think of it, Gertrude—in uniform and with real swords on hip!

Mrs. Golightley. [*Sits herself at table and begins mixing a mayonnaise dressing.*] Moses!—Oh, where is the man?—Moses!

Enter MOSES.

Moses. Ma'am, my duty.

Mrs. Golightley. Bid those strange gentlemen enter. [*Exit MOSES.*

Mrs. Golightley. [*Stirring vigorously.*] Sweet revenge, come hither.

Madge. In shoulder-straps.

[*Enter CAPTAINS SMITH and BRAND in uniform, wigs, false whiskers and moustaches. Their appearance is very hirsute. They pause near the door.*]

Madge. I must—I must fall in love with somebody! I feel that it is a necessity of my nature.

Mrs. Golightley. Oh, some one to sing to me, sigh for me, die for me!

Captain Smith. }
Captain Brand. } Ahem!

Madge. [*Starting.*] Did I hear a reciprocal voice?

Mrs. Golightley. Did I?

Captain Smith. }
Captain Brand. } Ahem!

[*Both ladies spring to their feet and retreat in astonishment, when they appear to discover, and for the first time, the presence of the two gentlemen.*]

Madge. [*Hanging her head demurely.*] And I have betrayed to strangers the one secret of my soul.

Mrs. Golightley. By what right, sirs, have you surprised us at our confidences? Dear friend [*addressing MADGE*], he has such an eye, that gentleman there, that I tremble.

Captain Brand. [*Advancing and lisping.*] Oddth life! We were juththaying th' thame thing 'bout your thweet eyeth, an' we don' mind echoth.

Captain Smith. [*Also advancing.*] That fweller withwout, there, twold us nobwody waw at whome; thwat Mwister Gwolightley waw gwone to mweet us.

Mrs. Golightley. It is true. We are strangers here, like yourselves, taking refuge from the storm [*waving her hand towards MADGE*],—my friend, Miss Dacre, and myself.

Madge. [*Sweeping her hand in turn.*] My friend, Miss Madge Kirby, and myself.

Captain Brand. [*Coming nearer.*] Thweet name, that. Thweet name, Madge ith. He'th Thmith. [*Indicating with his thumb CAPTAIN SMITH, who bows very low indeed.*]

Captain Smith. Wand he's Bwand. [*Indicating CAPTAIN BRAND, who proceeds to take his sword from between his legs. This accomplished, he in turn bows profoundly to the ladies, with his arms akimbo.*]

Madge. Oh, mwiy, how pwitty!

Captain Smith. Pwitty? you ware th' pwitty wone. I love you alweady!

Mrs. Golightley. Allow me to play the part of hostess, and beg you gentlemen to seat yourselves. I was about mixing a dressing for the salad when you appeared. [*To CAPTAIN BRAND.*] Will you kindly assist me.

[*He bows ecstatically and seats himself beside her at table.*]

Captain Smith. An' you,—what were you dwooning, Mwiss Daçwaw?

Madge. Only trying to crochet. Would you like to try?

Captain Smith. Twy? I'd love to twy.

Madge. [*Handing him the needle and wool.*] Then you shall, sir.

Captain Smith. [*Bending tenderly nearer.*] No, I dwon't mwean twy that.

Mrs. Golightley. [*Showing her mayonnaise already made to CAPTAIN BRAND.*] Isn't it just a perfect symphony in oil? a dream of the palate in creamy yellow?

Captain Brand. Yes; I dream me of dils, dils, daffidowndillies, of all sweet spring things—— [*Then perceiving from the expression of surprise in her face that he has forgotten his lisp.*] Dilt, dilt, daffidowndillith; meadowy yellow cowthlip yellow. [*As she continued to regard him suspiciously he proceeds to change the current of her thoughts by frightening her.*] But while we dilly-dally thuth [thus], know ye, that a kith on the hand (if not on the lipth) maketh a drething, particularly thith kind of a thymphony in oil, all it thould be. Don't draw back, thweet one.

Mrs. Golightley. I must, sir generalissimo: you have known me only five minutes.

Captain Brand. An age, an age to my feelingth!

Captain Smith. [*Pricking up his ears.*] What aw you sayin' over there? I haven't gwot half so fwar.

Madge. You are wise, oh, man of buttons!

Mrs. Golightley. [*Tasting the mayonnaise.*] Done, and without the kiss on the hand. [*Rises from table.*] So, Captain Brand, you will see the propriety of leaving that particular ingredient out of your next rule.

[*MADGE rises also hastily from her chair, CAPTAN SMITH is become so aggressive in his adoring attitude.*]

Captain Brand. Yeth, yeth, but I can't thtand being dithappointed. Pr'ythee! pr'ythee! [*Follows MRS. GOLIGHTLEY in her flight round the room.*]

Mrs. Golightley. Moses! Moses!

Madge. [*Fleeing from CAPTAIN SMITH.*] Mo—Mo—Moses!

Enter MOSES.

Moses. Your rooms are ready, gentlemen!

Captain Brand. [*Addressing him.*] Motheth [*Moses*], you are an interruption. You are worth [worse] than a pair of thitherth [*scissors*]. You cut uth thweethearth [*sweethearts*] in two—two!

Captain Smith. Aw wewaw [*au revoir*] we will weturn. [*Kissing his hand, he backs towards the door.*] Dwon't weep, we will weturn.

Captain Brand. By th' thick o' my thumb [*waves his sword vigorously in air*], tho' we go, we thpeed uth [*speed us*] back thoon again.

[*Exeunt both.*]

Mrs. Golightley. [*Dropping her face in her hands.*] I can never face Paul again,—never, never!

Re-enter CAPTAIN SMITH, stumbling. He takes his sword from between his legs, being incommoded by it.

Captain Smith. Dwon't weep. We will weturn. [*Exit.*]

Re-enter CAPTAIN BRAND, who remains near the door bowing and ecstatically kissing his hand.

Captain Brand. Thweets to the thweet [*sweets to the sweet*]. Thus I thay, day-day! [*Exit.*]

Mrs. Golightley. [*Watching the door apprehensively.*] Oh, dear! oh, dear! it's just like a nightmare.

Madge. [*Who has flung herself in a chair and proceeds to hide her head under the table-cloth.*] Yes; I wouldn't look again for anything. Oh, Frank, what would you say did you know all? That most horrid drum-major! I never want to see a sword or a shoulder-strap again. [*Taking her head from under the table-cloth.*] Weally, now, Gwertwoode mimicking CAPTAIN SMITH], what dwoos you thwink of it?

Mrs. Golightley. Think of it? Oh, Madge, don't laugh. It isn't a laughing matter. We have acted ridiculously.

Madge. You forget. What did *they* do under similar circumstances,—they, the men we love? [*Mimicking CAPTAIN SMITH.*] No, Fwank, Pwaul, we ware wewenged!

Mrs. Golightley. Yes, revenged; but *how*?

Enter MOSES.

Moses. Master is home again, and Mr. Frank, an' they're a-comin' up.

Mrs. Golightley. Detain them a moment. [*Exit MOSES.*]

Madge. Here's your veil, Gertrude.

Mrs. Golightley. Yes, let us play this commedietta to the end, however woful that end may be. We shall give these men a last chance to prove themselves true. Should they continue false, then—then——

Madge. Let's pretend to be asleep.

Mrs. Golightley. An excellent idea. While awaiting our gallants' return we have fallen asleep. So be it. But first I cry out against the need. Aroynt thee, oh, ye spinning fates!

Madge. Don't forget, Gertrude, to strike a pretty attitude.

Mrs. Golightley. Soft, you, they come.

Enter two figures—PAUL and FRANK—cloaked.

Paul. Asleep.

Frank. Yea, asleep. [*Stepping on tiptoe.*] What grace! What indolence! How rewarded is our impatience to return!

Paul. A vision of loveliness indeed! *Vive la bagatelle!* *Après nous le déluge*, and all that sort of thing! The sight makes a poet of me. I ought to run away, but I can't. I feel chained to the spot. I can't help liking these beautiful creatures to some heavenly duplicate. Two cherries upon a single stem. Two stars with but one twinkle, or—or something of that sort. Frank! One should not marry in haste. The awakening is sure to come. Observe [*kneels beside MADGE'S chair*] how petite, child-like. Frank, I have made a life's mistake in adoring tall women!

Frank. [*Making as if to peep under MRS. GOLIGHTLEY'S veil.*] Not so. Give me the tall—divinely tall—representative of her sex. I kneel at her feet. I bow as before a shrine. I—I——

Mr. Golightley. Tralee, be a man. Remember Madge, your *fiancée*, and do not go too far.

Frank. [*Starting to his feet and pacing the room.*] Madge—Madge Pom—Pom—— No, I can't pronounce *that* name. I have forgotten how. Kir—Kir—Kirby. *That* comes easy, dulcetly easy. Madge Kirby! Singular fatality that there should be two Madges and both doting on me! Yet, Paul, I have an idea. It's well to have one where two might be dangerous just now. There remains to me one consolation. When *she* returns, that is, when Madge Pom—Pom——

Paul. Pomme de Terre.

Frank. Yes, that's the name,—Pomme de Terre,—Madge Pomme de Terre. I had forgotten it for the moment. When Madge Pomme de Terre returns, in calling her by name, I shall address mentally another Madge, and live an existence of secret devotion to this other's image.

Paul. Tralee, be a man. See how brave *I* am; how self-controlled; and yet—and yet I long to throw myself at the feet of this beauteous chee-ild. [*He bows himself over the back of MADGE POMEROY'S chair.*]

Frank. They stir.

Paul. So ends our dream. Yet, before 'tis too late, while yet they slumber, let us——

Frank. Yes, let us. [*Softly kneels beside MRS. GOLIGHTLEY.*] 'Tis meet——

Paul. [*Kneeling beside MADGE.*] For repentance. Never! Rather satiety than that. But there must be no satiety. I implore you, no satiety! Only one kiss! Frank, my boy, remember Madge Pomme de Terre, and limit yourself to one!

Frank. I would die for one!

Paul. [*Looking across at FRANK.*] I bethink me. Tralee, we have ever made personal sacrifices one for the other. From our boyhood this has been true of us. Let our spirit of self-abnegation not end here. Though it kill us, we will exchange girls. I'll take the Kirby, and give to you this child of light and love, this beauteous Miss Dacre.

Frank. All right, even should we both think we are getting the worst of it.

[*They rise and cross each other on tiptoe, FRANK taking PAUL's place beside MADGE POMEROY, and PAUL kneeling beside his wife.*]

Paul. They stir again. Let us hasten. When I count three, forget yourself. One—two—three——

[*Just as they bend, the ladies start to their feet and stand waving the gentlemen tragically aside.*]

Madge. [*Addressing FRANK.*] Knave!

Mrs. Golightley. [*Confronting PAUL.*] Traitor!

Frank. That attitude!

Paul. That voice!

[*The ladies tear aside their veils. PAUL and FRANK half turn away.*]

Madge. Yes, hide your face, Frank Tralee [*throwing herself upon a chair with her head resting upon the table*], as I hide mine for shame of you. Intrigant! that I ever could have loved you!

Mrs. Golightley. My utmost suspicions as to your true nature verified. My last hope of continued faith in you destroyed. Yes, stand you there, Paul Golightley, abased, afraid to meet mine eyes!

Paul. A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse to fly this wrathful presence!

Mrs. Golightley. Go to; go to.

Frank. [*Sidling up to MADGE.*] This—er—er—event is so entirely unexpected. I—I cry *peccavi*! Give me to eat, sweet Nemesis, some humble pie. I eat—and eat—I swear——

Madge. Out of my sight!

Frank. I eat—and eat—I swear! I'm ancient Pistol downed to mother earth, or Nebuchadnezzar (an' it please you) a-foraging for grass. Grass or leek, all's the time to me. I'm downed. I'm humble.

Madge. [*Interrupting him.*] And I——

Frank. You? You are a lovely——

Madge. Pomme de terre! Vegetarian too, you see, sir. Common sympathy as to the vegetable kingdom, if nothing else, unites our souls,

sir. "Pom—Pom—Pomme de Terre! Yes, that's her name,—Madge Pomme de Terre. I'd forgotten it for the moment." Ha! ha! ha!

Frank. Margaret!

Madge. [*Striking a sardonic attitude.*] Sir, leek, grass, pomme de terre, all green and humble flora. As green as humble. We shall see. My name is *Pomeroy*, not Pomme de Terre, and my father did flirt his sword with the best of duellists.

Frank. Margaret, pause, reflect. Is it possible that you are giving me the sack?

Madge. The sack? The Bosphorus too! In with you from the harem window!

Frank. Enough. Rail at me, twist my head off, but don't you dare, in your revenge, take another sweetheart. S'death! don't you dare do it!

Madge. That's a comforting idea. I will—I will take one.

Paul. And you, unhappy Gertrude, would you gladly exchange me for another? Is that your meaning?

Mrs. Golightley. Exactly. Any one would do. Moses would do,—any one. I'm done forever with your emotional riff-raff. I'm off to some other shelter wheresoever I can find it.

[*At this moment PAUL and FRANK throw aside their cloaks, revealing the glittering uniforms of CAPTAINS SMITH and BRAND. Both chassée gallantly and bow, saying,*] At your service, ladies.

[*After a pause of astonishment, a silence of consternation, the ladies fly to each other's arms.*]

Paul. Spirit of Gentle Will! 'Tis all alarms here and excursions! The tucket sounds.

Frank. Yes, sound the trumpet. By Shakespeare, sound it! 'Tis time to point a moral or adorn a tale.

Mrs. Golightley. }
Madge. } Betrayed!

Paul. As you please, fair girls we left behind us. Smith and I have our whiskers in our pockets, our wigs on a hook outside the door. We can readorn ourselves in a moment if "presto" be your cry, an' you will whisper to us again as you whispered so sweetly, so longingly, just a little while ago, "Some one to sing to me, sigh for me, die for me!"

Frank. "Did I hear a reciprocal voice? Did I?" Margaret, did I?

[GERTRUDE and MADGE turn away.]

Paul. Give me your hand, Gertrude. And Madge, give yours to Frank. Isn't it about time to cry quits? Haven't we had our fun out? This has been a screaming farce from beginning to end.

Frank. And, as usual, the biters are bitten. Instead of biting us, they are bitten. But a truce, cry I, to all distressful compliments o the season and reason.

Enter MOSES with a loaded tray.

Moses. Here's a nice, fresh, hot supper, ma'am, and it is served.

Mrs. Golightley. We told you not to tell, sirrah!

Moses. [*Cowering.*] Not I, ma'am, I—I——

Madge. Yes, *there* stands the culprit. We never should have been discovered had Moses not betrayed us. I still maintain that man, under any circumstances, will do *anything*.

Paul. [*Aside.*] A little mixed as to sense. [*Aloud.*] I'll wind it for her neatly on a spool. Yes, man will forgive the most unjust suspicions harbored against him by the woman he loves, even should her suspicions relate to his last fib. Come, Gertrude, remember Captain Brand and let us make up.

Frank. That's a fair and generous proposition. I'll make one like it to you, my girl. I'll forgive that little affair of yours with a certain gentleman of the army,—one of the numerous Smiths,—should you fall penitently right here [*smiting the region over his heart*], right here, Madge,—*Madge Pomme de Terre*.

Mrs. Golightley. On one condition will I forgive you, Paul, one condition only,—you must never, *never* speak to Madge again.

Madge. Frank, you hear that condition? With us it works the other way. Sir, you must never, never even *look* at Gertrude.

Moses. Supper is served, ma'am.

All cry. Supper!

Paul. Well, after our recent unpleasantness here is some one thing which we may all agree upon. Supper is a good thing. Jealousy a vile thing. All hail, then, to the smoking viands! and to the night outside with jealousy, that rotten shape with its bat-like wings!

Gertrude. Yes, to the winds with jealousy! Paul, dear Paul, here is my hand. Take it, hold it fast, never let it go again.

Frank. Oh, that's the talk, is it? Then let us get married at once, my dear. I had begun to tremble, Margaret, for our future happiness. But if you women repent so easily and so sweetly, why, I guess I can stand it. So, to supper, sweetheart, and should I ever dare offer you potato under its French name, don't get *mad*, but laugh with me over the follies of this night.

Moses. [*Watching the ladies and gentlemen seat themselves at table.*] I thought supper 'ud fetch 'em,—that is, a nice, fresh, hot one. I'm the good angel into this household! As soon as I come there they stopped their nonsense. Just think of it! I—Moses Periwinkle—have made peace! lo, peace! [*Wags his head sagaciously and crosses his hands upon his apron.*]

[*Curtain.*]

MRS. WILDRICK.

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